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SUBJECT: PDAS NANCY MCELDOWNEY'S MEETING WITH E-6 POLITICAL
DIRECTORS; 18 FEBRUARY 2010, LONDON.

Classified By: Greg Berry, Political Minister Counselor, E.O. 12958,
for reasons b and d

11. (C/NF) Summary. EUR PDAS Nancy McEldowney's February 18 consultations in London with E-6 counterparts on European security underscored the need to engage Russia in a way that advanced Allied interests; to renew discussions of the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty regime to strengthen predictability, transparency, and information sharing; to strengthen the OSCE; and to approach NATO's Strategic Concept Review as an opportunity to express NATO's future mission while tackling internal reform. End summary.

12. (C/NF) McEldowney joined counterparts from the E-6 (France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, and the UK) for a February 18 meeting in London to exchange ideas on a range of issues related to European security. The meeting was hosted by UK FCO Director of International Security Paul Johnston. Also in attendance were: Patrick Maisonnave, MFA Director of Strategic Affairs - Security and Disarmament, (France); Eberhard Pohl, MFA Deputy Political Director, (Germany); Massino Marotti, MFA Director for International Security and Political-Military Affairs (Italy); Adam Kobieracki, MFA Director of Security Policy Department (Poland); Carmen Bujan Freire, MFA Director General for Strategic Affairs and Terrorism (Spain).

Engaging with Russia

13. (C/NF) PDAS McEldowney stressed the importance of weighing Russia's current economic, energy, and demographic challenges when considering how best to influence Russian behavior. Allies need not be overly anxious about Russia's treaty proposals delivered to NATO and the OSCE in December 2009. The proposals reflected outdated Cold War thinking and we need to use our response to guide them to a more modern approach. The proposals offered an opportunity to address Russia's concerns and make progress on a positive security agenda.

14. (C/NF) France's Maisonnave said that Russia would use a non-response to its proposals as a pretext to withdraw from engaging in the Corfu Process or in the NATO-Russia Council (NRC). The Russian proposals were an opportunity to engage collectively in the NRC to "tell the Russians what we like in their ideas and what we don't like." Spain's Bujan Freire noted her surprise at the Russian proposals, calling the writing "primitive" and based in "19th century thinking," but agreed that it was important not to answer Russia with silence.

15. (C/NF) Poland's Kobieracki disagreed, both tactically: arguing that responding to the Russian proposals buys into the Russian argument that the West did not live up to the promises of the 1990s; and strategically: the Allies need to identify their own positive agenda to tackle Russian

concerns, separate from the Russian proposals. Kobieracki agreed that we should use every institution available to engage Russia, but said he could not accept the Russian view that NATO represented the biggest threat to Russian security.

The UK's Johnston noted Russia's argument that it had "extended a hand in the late 1990s" that was not reciprocated, and Russia's motivation in the current context may be driven by a fear of economic and security irrelevance.

He opined that Russia may have tabled its proposals in December in order for them to be rejected, allowing Russia to "retreat to its bunker." Johnston indicated that the FCO would be advising Prime Minister Gordon Brown to respond to Russia that its treaty proposal was unworkable, but that the UK welcomed the opportunity for genuine reflection on Russia's security concerns in Europe.

Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty

¶6. (C/NF) Maisonnave welcomed a renewed discussion of the CFE, saying the time had come to discuss the "legacy of CFE" and how to deal with it. Germany's Pohl concurred that it was key to revert to "a real and constructive dialogue to maintain a legally-binding agreement in and for Europe." Pohl stressed that there were merits in having something legally-binding that was acceptable to the Russians. The Adapted CFE Treaty was designed to manage NATO enlargement, and we should not walk away from it. Italy's Marotti agreed that the CFE was the cornerstone of European security and envisioned a process to address Russian concerns and provide feedback. Kobieracki demurred, saying that rather than focusing on how to "save the CFE," more attention should be paid to review a range of arms control instruments that would

be effective in meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century in Europe. Stressing that he was not advocating getting rid of the CFE, Kobieracki underscored the primacy of military predictability for Poland and the need to look at a variety of tools and regimes to address this concern. Poland remained concerned about uncoordinated Russian military exercises near its border, Russian military doctrine, and what military hardware the Russians may have in Kaliningrad.

¶7. (C/NF) PDAS McEldowney stressed that the most valuable elements of the CFE regime were predictability, transparency, and information sharing. The focus should be on enhancing these elements in European security institutions. We wanted the CFE regime to continue, but we had to find a way to preserve the principle and the reality of host-nation consent, and that meant solving the Georgia problem.

¶8. (C/NF) Spain's Bujan Freire expressed the view that the CFE may have "outlived its time," but the essential goal was to avoid a security vacuum in Europe. It mattered little whether the security commitments were legal or political, or comprised the Adapted CFE or another regime.

OSCE

¶9. (C/NF) The UK's Paul Johnston raised the open questions of whether we could persuade Russia to strengthen the OSCE; how did Russia see the OSCE versus NATO; and could we achieve much through the OSCE? Bujan Freire expressed the view that the OSCE needed to be rejuvenated; that it had long been "a playground for the U.S. and Russia to fight over central Asia." Underscoring her previous point she said, "if we have a problem with the Russian proposals to NATO and the OSCE, we should say so. It's important to show the Russians we're serious at the OSCE." Recognizing increased Russian wariness of the OSCE, PDAS McEldowney stressed the U.S. goal of strengthening the organization, especially in the areas of transparency and crisis response. Johnston opined that while Russia "may refuse to play with us, we must not backtrack on our principles" of engagement.

NATO'S Strategic Concept Review

¶10. (C/NF) Paul Johnston shared that his original view had been that updating the strategic concept would offer more risk than opportunity and expose differences among Allies without resolving issues. He now saw it as an opportunity to restate the Alliance's positions and priorities in areas such as deterrence and enlargement. Eberhard Pohl expressed the view that what would be produced at Lisbon must offer explicit clear guidance to the working level and not simply be a "public diplomacy exercise." "Form must follow function and not vice versa," Pohl said, stressing that the lifetime of the document would be short, and that its primary purpose should be to introduce guidance into the NATO system on the way forward.

¶11. (C/NF) Maisonnave, who noted that the pending report of Imminent Persons Group would provide the needed detail, indicated that the global financial crisis had changed the context of the review; among the real issues to tackle was reform of the command structure, and it was necessary "to be clear on NATO's financial room for maneuver in addressing reforms." Johnston offered the view that Allies should possibly be thinking of the review as a two-part document: a broad political document of NATO's mission in the new century, and a reform manifesto.

¶12. (C/NF) Kobieracki expressed confusion about the purpose of the concept review. He said that he expected it to cover NATO instruments and to address the key partnerships of NATO-EU and NATO-Russia, but feared that the result would be a "statement on institutional reform." Kobieracki underscored that what was needed was guidance on non-Article 5 missions and the NATO-EU-Russia partnerships. Paul Johnston agreed that the concept review should be broad enough to include NATO instruments, Article 5, enlargement, and partnerships) but also focus on process. The result, he said, might be one document addressing both reform and process. Pohl agreed that the Lisbon document could not be a "splash with no substance," and hoped that the review would produce important policy statements along the lines of 1999 and 1991.

Next Steps

¶13. (SBU/NF) The group agreed that this sort of informal exchange among the E-6 plus the United States was a useful sounding board and undertook to meet again between May and June (after Tallinn and before the Defense Ministers meeting).

¶14. (U) This cable has been cleared by PDAS Nancy McEldowney.

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